



Ongoing Efforts and Challenges for Managing Deep-sea Corals in the Gulf of Mexico

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Who is the Council?

Seventeen voting members:

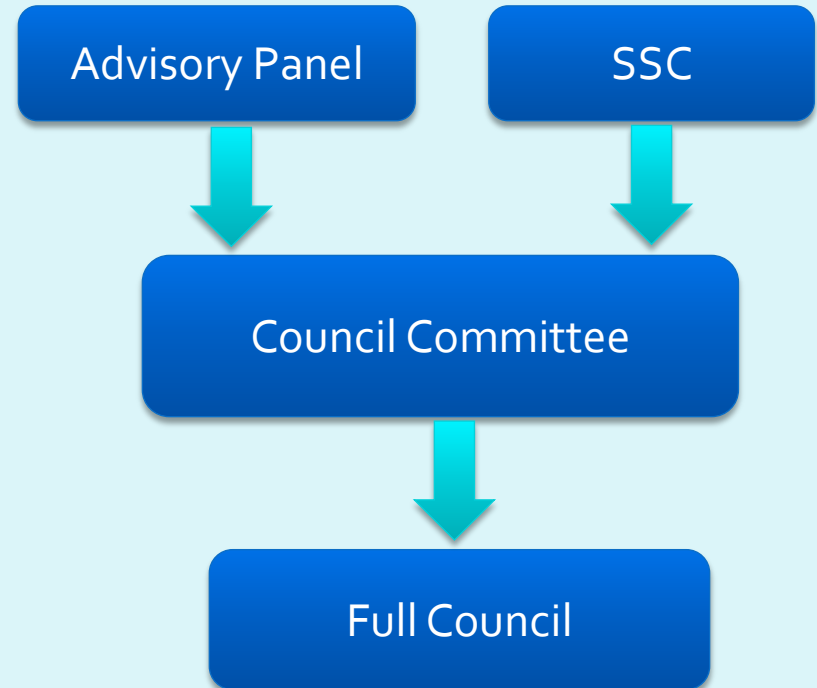
- Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries
- Directors of the 5 Gulf state marine resource management agencies
- Eleven members who represent different interests in the fishery



Advisory Bodies



The Council draws upon the expertise of knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities, and the public.



The Magnuson-Stevens Act

Fishery Conservation & Management Act of 1976

- Set up the regional Council system
- Extended control of the U.S waters to 200 nautical miles offshore
- Phased out foreign fishing activities
- Created measures to:
 - Prevent overfishing
 - Allow overfished stocks to recover
 - Conserve & manage fishery resources

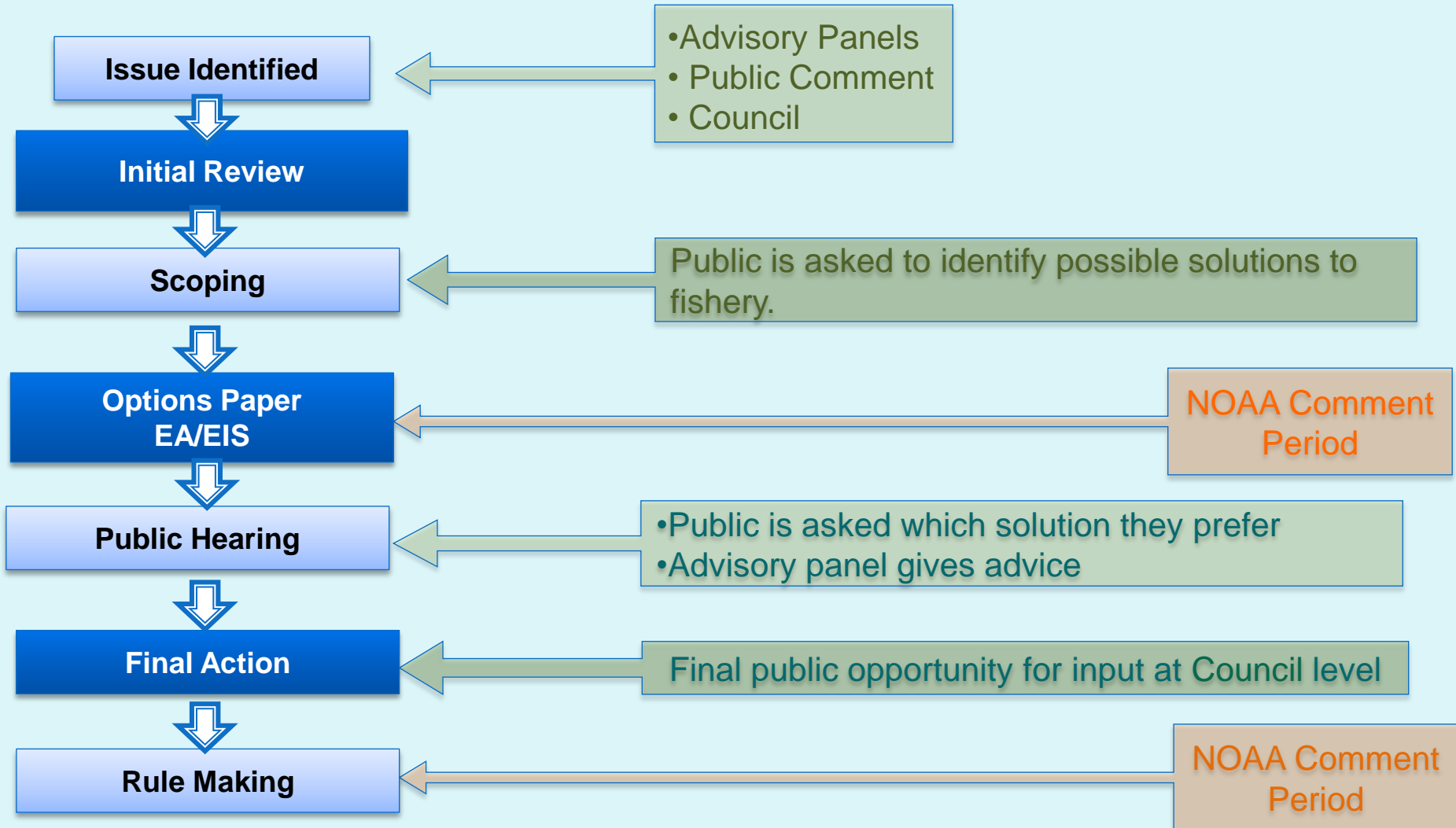
Sustainable Fisheries Act-1996

- Rebuild overfished fisheries
- Protect essential fish habitat
- Reduce bycatch
- Consider the effects of management decisions on communities



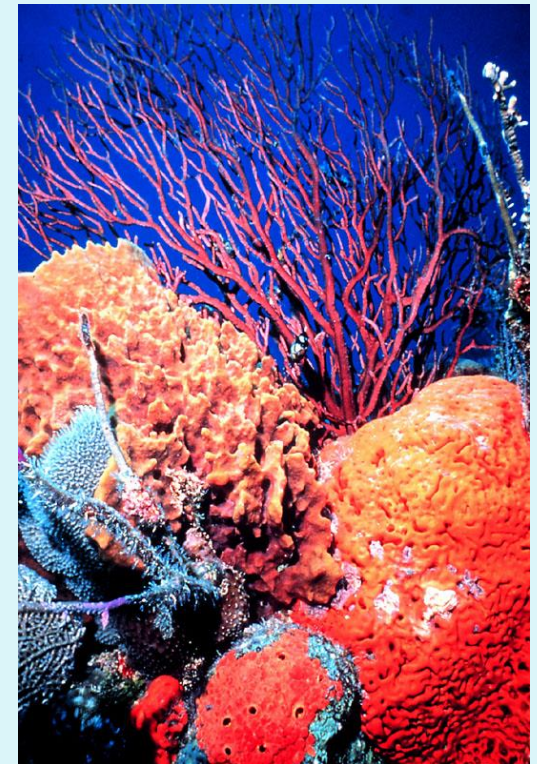
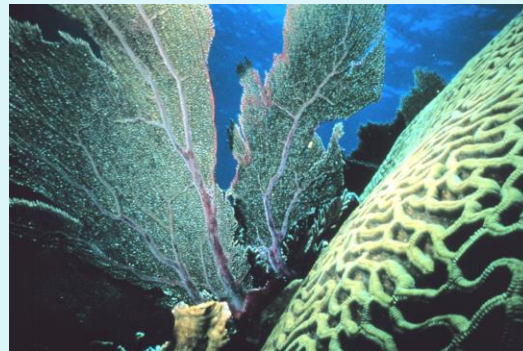
Public

Involvement in Fishery Management Plan Development



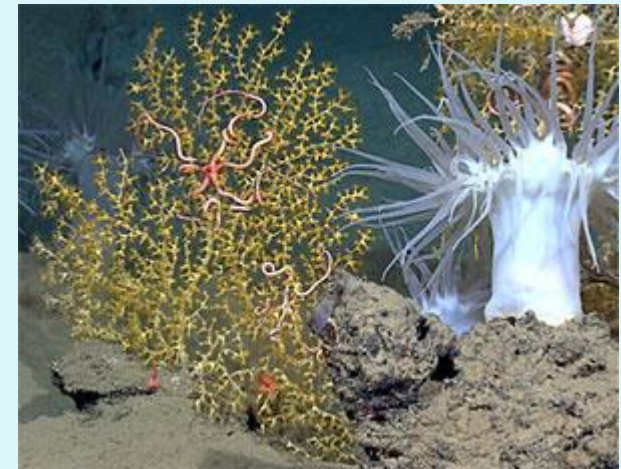
Coral

- 150+ species in the Fishery Management Plan
- ACL = Zero
- Coral Essential Fish Habitat = where coral occurs
- Octocorals managed by the state of FL



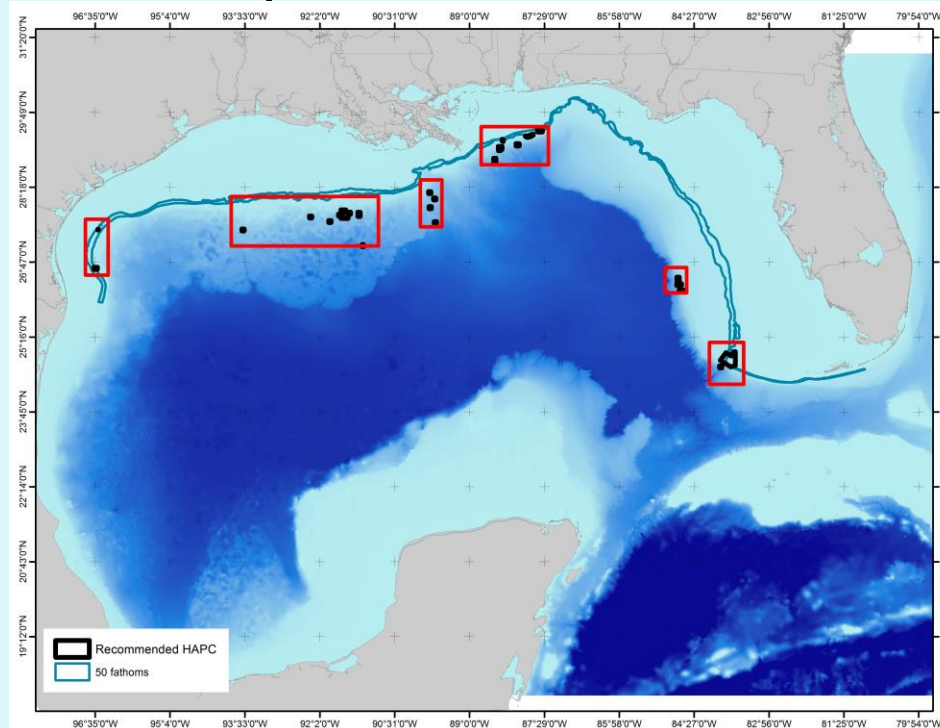
Timeline

- Process initiated after a workshop funded by the CRCP (2013)
- Meeting of Advisory Panels and Scientific and Statistical Committees (2014)
- Working Group to provide recommendations (2014)
- Meeting of Advisory Panels and Scientific and Statistical Committees (2015 and 2016)
- Scoping Document (2016)- It started!!!



Recommended Areas

- 47 identified from the 2014 Working Group
- Coral SSC and AP and Shrimp AP met to set priority areas
- Based on known coral presence and recommendations from experts



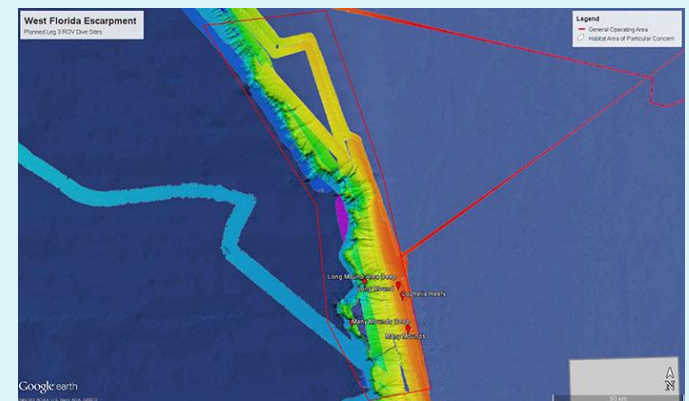
Successes

Information from researchers

Participation in the Ocean
Exploration site determining
process

Use of fishing information to gain
industry participation, input, and
collaboration

Two meetings with industry
participants helping facilitate the
boundaries and discussion of
resources



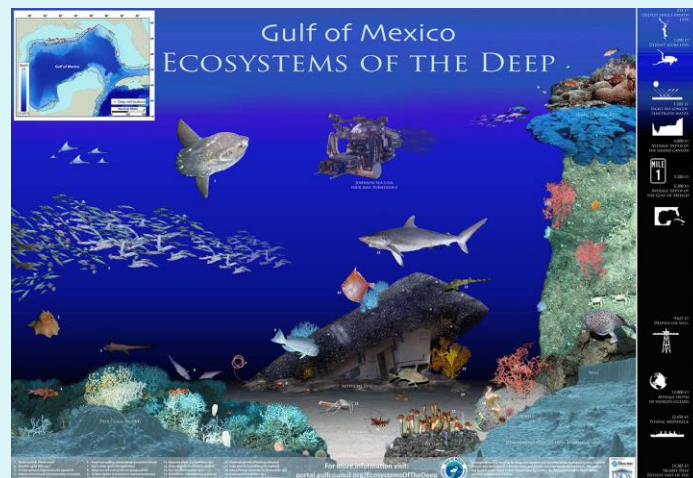
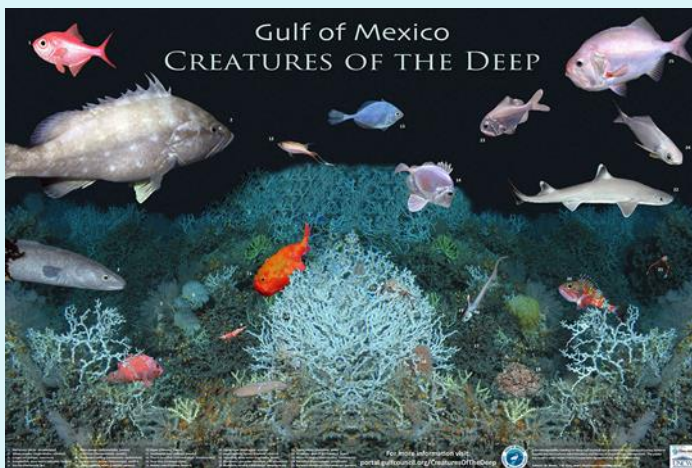
Challenges

- No direct connection of a current fishery species using deepwater coral as habitat
- Resistance to more closed areas
- No Council champion of the issue
- Limited data or area of investigation
- Reincorporation of octocorals
- Not red snapper



Moving Forward

- Continue to add data
- Make data publicly available via the portal
- Continue to provide the public with resources that highlight deep ecosystems



Gulf Council Data Portal

Coral portal website: <http://portal.gulfcouncil.org/>

- Online mapping for review, discussion, and decision making
- Improved access to the 'data' supporting management decisions
- Explore distribution and diversity patterns of corals in the Gulf of Mexico
- GIS data download capabilities
- View individual coral record information (Name, Species, Depth, and Source)

